GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3156
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2016
Approval to Hubli-Ankola Railway Line
Simha Shri Prathap

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Green Tribunal has given approval to the Hubli-Ankola railway line, which passes through the eco-sensitive Western Ghats in Karnataka;
(b) if so, whether Karnataka has submitted an appropriate proposal for diversion of forest land for this important project and if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether a number of railway projects in Karnataka have been referred to the Ministry of Environment and Forests for its clearance;
(d) if so, the details of dates of sending these proposals and the details of projects which have been granted forest clearance; and
(e) the reasons for non-implementation of the approved projects?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3156 BY SHRI PRATHAP SIMHA TO BE ANSWERED IN LOK SABHA ON 16.03.2016 REGARDING APPROVAL TO HUBLI-ANKOLA RAILWAY LINE.

(a): Hubli-Ankola New Line project was sanctioned in 1997-98 and land acquisition was taken up. In 2005, a proposal for diversion of forest land was submitted to the Forest Department by Railways and a joint inspection with Ministry of Environment & Forest(MOEF) (Now Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change) was completed in June, 2007. In September 2006, Central Empowered Committee (CEC) advised Ministry of Railways to stop all works on the project. CEC submitted its report to the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India on 03.08.2015, recommending MOEF not to reconsider/approve the proposal for the diversion of forest land. The Hon'ble Supreme Court transferred the matter to the National Green Tribunal(NGT) and after a series of hearings, the NGT has disposed off the case with liberty to the Project proponent i.e. Railways to move the State Government by submitting an appropriate proposal for diversion of land for this project.

(b): Matter has been taken up with Government of Karnataka for diversion of forest land as per fresh proposal.

(c) & (d): In addition to Hubli-Ankola new line project, a proposal for diversion of 2.22 hectare of forest land for Tinaighat-Castle Rock (part of Hospet-Vasco-da-Gama doubling) Project has been submitted for approval of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change through Government of Karnataka by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited on 02.02.2016.

(e): All the approved projects have been taken up for implementation. However, some works have been delayed/stalled due to non-availability of land, shifting of services, construction of road over bridges and road under bridges by road maintaining agencies, apart from availability of adequate funds.

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